Queen’s Garden Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

This play begins in 1966 in Westside LA. It centers around Brenda Jean, a girl of mixed race, who works at her father’s pharmacy. As the play progresses (and times passes), audiences see how the different gangs of LA interact.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

The intrusion happens the first time we are introduced to the fighting between the gangs - this happens in the section titled “Westside Warriors” when Kali and Smoke fight the Corner Boys. Throughout the play, this fighting will escalate and ultimately result in tragedy.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

I would say the unique factor is when Bullet is killed, forcing Brenda to move away to San Francisco. When she returns, having been removed from her situation for a while, she finds the gang violence hasn't gone away. Kali then moves, and Brenda can see first hand the effects of this fighting.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

The dramatic question is “will Smoke kill Kali” for selling him out to the DEA.

5. Provide an illustration of the *two kinds of exposition* that the play has in it.

Information known to most characters: loyalty to one’s own gang and the people in it is important. This aspect of life in LA propels much of the action in *Queen’s Garden*.

Information know to one character: It is revealed to Brenda that Smoke is about to go after Kali.

6. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

By far, the most theatrical moment of the play happens in “Shoot-out” when Smoke and his men come to attack Kali. This scene involves fast paced action, fighting, and an innocent death.

7. List some of the *themes* of the play.

* Gang violence
* Finding safety in your family/group
* Allowing or not allowing your race or experiences determine your path

8. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

Brenda wants to go to college, but she drops out after her family's pharmacy is sold and moves back to Westside to teach the Lit. class because no one else would.

Sherry wanted to go to college, but she had Smoke’s baby.

Brenda’s dad wants her to move back home from college and help provide for the family and eventually marry; however, Brenda no longer feels connected to her family.

9. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

The Westside jackets are mentioned several times in the play, and are used to symbolize the unity and tight bonds formed in the gangs. Hai’s porcelain tea cups symbolize all that’s left of her family - just as her family used to nourish her, so these cups are involved in creating a nourishing friendship with Brenda.

Queens Garden is a powerful title that only makes sense at the very end of the play. Mary is holding a bunch of beautiful roses, symbolizing all the children she cares for, when the two gangs open fire. Even though many of the young men die that day, and her roses are destroyed, the last line of the play tells us that there is hope for some of the young people she helped raise.

10. Briefly define the *family relationships* that are examined in the play.

In this play, family relations play an important role. At the beginning, Brenda’s family all work together in the pharmacy, establishing from the start that Brenda comes from a loving family. Aunti Mary also acts as a mother to many of the characters: Brenda, Smoke, and her own son, Kali. Brenda at one point calls Hai, her roommate, more of her family than her real family, and Kali brings up the fact that often family can be those people who bind you together - in his case, the Westside gang.